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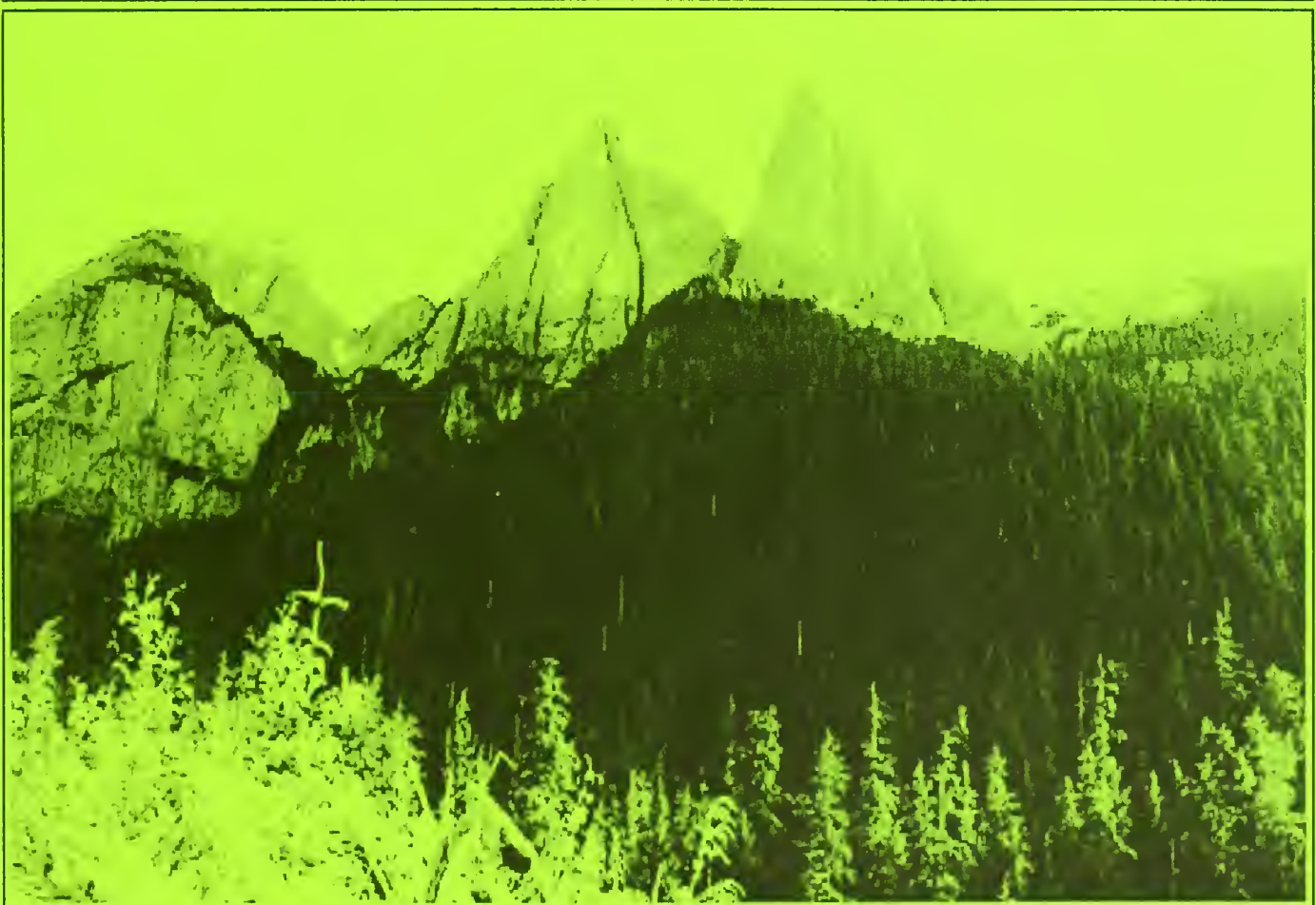
January 1997

# Lab Bay Project Area Final Environmental Impact Statement

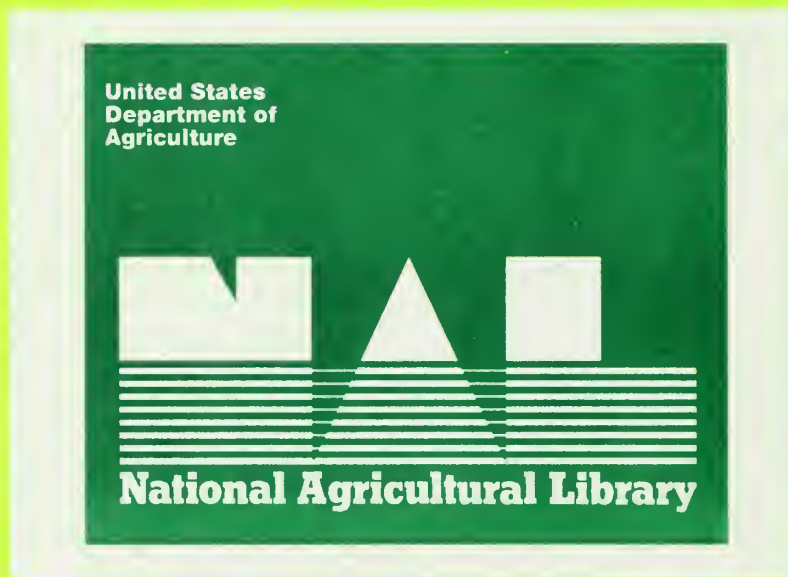
Ketchikan Pulp Company  
Long-Term Timber Sale Contract

## RECORD OF DECISION

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Lab Bay Environmental Impact Statement



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Forest  
Service

Alaska Region

Tongass National Forest  
Ketchikan Area  
Federal Building  
Ketchikan, AK 99901

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Date: 12-30-96

Dear Reader:

Attached is the Record of Decision (ROD) and Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Lab Bay Timber Sale Project, Tongass National Forest, Ketchikan Area. The following items are included in this package:

1. Record of Decision
2. Record of Decision Map (large scale)
3. Final Environmental Impact Statement and Summary (Volume I)
4. Final EIS Appendices A-Q (Volume II)
  - (a) Public Comment Letters and Forest Service Response (Appendix O)

A small number of requests (17) for copies of the Summary only were received. I have decided to combine the Summary within Volume I of the Final EIS and distribute the full EIS to all mail list addresses rather than incur the higher costs of printing the Summary as a separate document.

Appendix F contains only those Unit Design Cards that have been substantially modified since publication of the Draft EIS. Please refer to the Unit Design Cards in the Draft EIS along with the modified cards in the Final EIS. Full sets of the Unit Design Cards are available at the Supervisor's Office of the Ketchikan Administrative Area upon request.

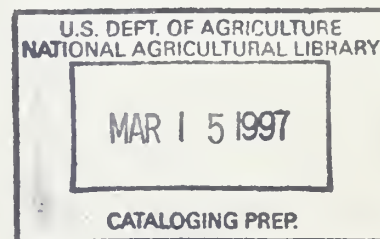
The ROD documents my final decision on the selection of an alternative, and the factors considered in reaching the decision. The effective date of implementation for the decision and the Notice of Rights of Appeal are also specified in the ROD.

I want to thank those of you who took the time to review and comment on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement as well as those who participated in the Subsistence Hearings. Your interest in the management of the Tongass National Forest is appreciated.

Sincerely

BRADLEY E. POWELL  
Forest Supervisor

Enclosures



Caring for the Land and Serving People







**Lab Bay Timber Sale  
Final Environmental Impact Statement**

# **Record of Decision**

**Ketchikan Area - Tongass National Forest  
U.S.D.A. Forest Service, Alaska Region**

**Lead Agency**

U.S.D.A. Forest Service  
Tongass National Forest  
Ketchikan Area

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# Record of Decision

## Background

The purpose and need for this project is to implement direction contained in the Tongass Land Management Plan (TLMP 1979, as amended), to help provide a sustained level of timber supply to meet annual and TLMP planning cycle market demand, and to provide local employment in the woods products industry, consistent with providing for the multiple use and sustained yield of all renewable forest resources. Another objective is to provide timber volume that will contribute to a three-year current timber supply under the KPC Long-term Timber Sale Contract (No. A10fs-1042; Sections B0.61 and B0-62) and/or the Ketchikan Area Independent Timber Sale Program. The alternatives and actions considered are possible approaches to meeting this purpose and need. The EIS study process was designed to help ensure that, in meeting this purpose and need, the Forest Service makes the most informed decision possible for this Project Area specifically, and for the Tongass National Forest generally. The Lab Bay Project is expected to provide up to approximately 85 MMBF of timber, given the guidance of the Forest Plan.

The Project Area is located entirely within the KPC Contract Primary Sale Area. Under TLMP, approximately 89 percent of the Project Area has been given Land Use Designation (LUD) III or IV. The TLMP schedules timber sale preparation for Management Areas K01 and K03 in the Project Area. A comparison of the desired future condition for the Project Area, as reflected in the TLMP direction, with the existing condition shows the need to convert suitable stands of old growth to managed productive stands capable of long-term timber production.

Section 101 of the Tongass Timber Reform Act of 1990 (TTRA) directs the USDA Forest Service "... to the extent consistent with providing for the multiple use and sustained yield of all renewable forest resources, seek to provide a supply of timber from the Tongass National Forest which (1) meets the annual market demand for timber from such forest and (2) meets the market demand from such forest for each planning cycle." Section 101 of the TTRA specifies that Forest Service efforts to seek to meet market demand are subject to appropriations, National Forest Management Act (NFMA) requirements, and other applicable laws. Providing a timber supply from the Tongass for sustained local wood products industry employment and related economic and social benefits is an objective of the TLMP; the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA), as amended by the TTRA; and the KPC Long-term Contract.

There is demonstrated mill capacity in the region to process the logs, if supply of timber is available. There is also a projected need for the timber volume being considered from this Project Area (see Appendix A) for the Forest Service to come closer to meeting an objective of providing a three-year supply of timber under contract to the existing dependent industry, as a means of providing for stability in relation to fluctuating market demand (Morse 1995). There is a substantial component of the economy of Southeast Alaska that is dependent on a viable timber industry. Based on these factors, the need for the project is clearly indicated.

KPC has announced their plans to close the pulp mill effective March 1997. In the event this planned closure results in the termination of the Long-term Contract, the volume from this project will be made available through competitively bid independent timber sales.

Public scoping, data collection and analysis, and document production began with publication of the Notice of Intent in the Federal Register on September 6, 1991. This Record of Decision and the Final EIS disclose the environmental effects of the alternatives considered and document the decision for authorization of activities within the Project Area.

In developing the Final EIS and this Record of Decision, it is recognized that less than complete knowledge exists about many relationships and conditions of wildlife, fish, forests, jobs, and communities. The ecology, inventory, and management of a large forest area is a complex and developing science. The biology of wildlife species prompts questions about population dynamics and habitat relationships. The interaction of resource supply, the economy, and communities is the subject matter of an inexact science.

The data and level of analysis used in the Final EIS were commensurate with the importance of the possible impacts (40 CFR 1502.15). When encountering a gap in information, the interdisciplinary team (IDT) took one of two approaches: (1) they collected the missing information or conducted the analysis necessary to identify important relationships; or (2) they concluded that, although the missing information would have added precision to estimates or better specified a relationship, the basic data and central relationships are sufficiently well established in the respective sciences that any new information would be very unlikely to reverse or nullify understood relationships. Thus, any information not available for the Final EIS was determined to be not essential for a reasoned choice among the alternatives.

## Decision

This Record of Decision documents my decision to make timber volume available from the Lab Bay Project Area that contributes to the KPC Contract and/or the Independent Sale Program. My decision encompasses the following:

- the volume to make available in this Project Area in multiple “timber offerings” or timber sales;
- the location and design of timber harvest units;
- the location and design of road systems;
- the location and design of log transfer facilities;
- necessary standards and guidelines, mitigation measures, and enhancement opportunities for resources other than timber;
- the implementation of ecosystem management, including the human component;
- whether there may be a significant restriction on subsistence use and if so, related findings and measures to minimize impacts on subsistence users;
- road management objectives, including closures for resource protection.

It is my decision to select Alternative 6 with modifications for implementation in the Lab Bay Project Area (see the description of Alternative 6 in Chapter 2 of the Final EIS). This decision is responsive to issues raised during scoping, data gathered and analyzed, public responses to the Draft EIS, and testimony received at the subsistence hearings.

### Modifications to Alternative 6

I modify Alternative 6 by making the following specified changes.

1. Units 536-208, 536-209, and 531.1-241 are added to Alternative 6 to form the ROD Selected Alternative (Selected Alternative). These units are compatible with the framework for Alternative 6, but were not included in it due to their isolation from other units in the alternative. These units require good market conditions to be most economically viable due to their isolation from the main road network and the use of helicopter yarding for two of the units. All three units will require the use of the Calder LTF for transport. I am making this



volume available now, rather than retaining the volume to be combined in the future with other available volume in the area, because the need to provide volume is high at this time.

These modifications do not result in substantial changes to the Proposed Action of harvesting approximately 85 MMBF on approximately 4,550 acres within the Project Area. These modifications do not present significant new circumstances or information relevant to environmental concerns and bearing on the Proposed Action or its impacts. The effects of harvest of these three units are fully analyzed in the Final EIS under Alternatives 2 (full unit pool), 3, and 4, and in the Lab Bay Resource Reports (Planning Record). These effects are summarized below for the major resource areas.

Units 531.1-241, 536-208, and 536-209 total approximately 155 acres of harvest under the following harvest types:

531.1-241:	Type C (helicopter yarding);	55 acres
536-208:	Type B (clearcut with retention);	35 acres
	Type D (clearcut with retention);	25 acres
536-209:	Type G (light shelterwood, helicopter yarding);	40 acres

Total volume to be harvested from the three units is approximately 2,227 MBF. All three units are comprised of low volume (Volume Classes 4 and 5) timber, and their harvest moves Management Area K03 closer toward the proportional harvest requirement of the TTRA. No new LTF's would be required for harvest of these units.

Approximately one mile of new road construction will be required to access unit 536-208. The proposed road alignment does not include any Class I or II stream crossings. Soils concerns were identified within all three units, and mitigation in the form of helicopter yarding (full suspension), retention, and partial suspension is prescribed in the unit design cards. The three units and the proposed access road are not located on high vulnerability karst.

Harvest of the three units will not affect any of the Old-Growth Retention Areas mapped in the Final EIS Project Area Map. No threatened, endangered, or sensitive species or species of concern have been documented in or near these units. These units are not located within high value subsistence use areas, as identified in the Final EIS.

The three units and associated access road will not affect any known cultural resources. Road construction and harvest of the units will not affect any existing Recreation Places or Priority Travel Route and Use Area Viewsheds.

## Description of the Selected Alternative

The Selected Alternative includes the following features to help meet the purpose and need for the Project Area and to respond to public comments regarding timber harvest in the Lab Bay Project Area.

1. The Selected Alternative will provide timber volume that will contribute to a three-year current timber supply under the KPC Long-Term Contract and/or the Ketchikan Area Independent Sale Program. This specified harvest will provide approximately 35.7 MMBF of sawlog and utility volume from 49 harvest units on approximately 2,040 acres and approximately 6.5 MMBF of right-of-way volume, for a total of approximately 42.2 MMBF. Design features of the harvest units are described in detail on the Harvest Unit Design Cards (See Planning Record). There are no units in the Selected Alternative that exceed 100 acres in size. Integrated silvicultural prescriptions have been developed for each unit; a sample is presented in Appendix G of the Final EIS. A full set of the harvest prescriptions is included in the Project Planning Record.
2. The Selected Alternative includes partial-cut harvest, rather than clearcut harvest, for 373 acres (18 percent of the total harvest). This is consistent with the Forest Service Chief's policy to reduce the use of clearcutting as a standard timber harvest practice on National Forest System lands (as outlined in the Chief's June 4, 1992 letter in conjunction with the

adoption of ecosystem management). The partial-cut harvest prescriptions for these units are intended to provide for greater structural diversity on a stand level, promote regeneration (especially western red cedar and yellowcedar), maintain riparian habitat, maintain scenic quality, and leave young, vigorously growing trees. The remaining acres are scheduled for one of four types of clearcutting.

All clearcut types are designed to allow for the retention of reserve trees.

- Type A clearcuts leave safe snags and unmerchantable reserve trees where conditions allow within a 50- to 100-foot border along setting boundaries.
- Type B clearcuts are similar, except a specified number of snags and live tree replacements with minimum diameter limits are retained within the 50- to 100-foot border.
- Type C clearcuts leave unmerchantable trees and safe snags over the entire unit.
- Type D clearcuts provide clumps of reserve trees in islands or fingers within the harvest unit and typically result in approximately 5 acres of retention within or adjacent to each unit.

Appendix D of the Final EIS displays a list of harvest units by alternative and harvest type. The Harvest Unit Design Cards and the Integrated Silvicultural Prescriptions (Planning Record) provide specific direction for field layout to accomplish these objectives.

3. The Selected Alternative includes construction of an estimated 30 miles of new system road and 4 miles of reconstructed roads in order to access the selected timber harvest units. Appendix H of the Final EIS contains the Road Cards with direction for the location of each road. The Road Cards list road nodes and road management objectives (including closures) for future management of the transportation system. The Selected Alternative excludes construction of the proposed Calder Tie Road.
4. The Selected Alternative incorporates an uneven-aged management plan for the harvest and long-term management of Thorne Island. This plan provides for a sustained harvest level of approximately 3.5 MMBF each entry, with re-entries scheduled to occur every 15 years. This approach to managing Thorne Island eliminates the need for 15.5 miles of road and a new Log Transfer Facility. The uneven-aged management plan will reduce the effects of timber harvest on subsistence, wildlife, and visual resources compared to a conventional harvest plan, while still providing volume that contributes to the Southeast Alaska timber industry. The costs of implementing the uneven-aged management plan are lower in the short-term due to the reduction of road and LTF construction, but slightly higher over the length of the rotation due to higher logging costs associated with helicopter yarding.
5. The existing LTF's located at Labouchere Bay, Calder Bay, and Whale Pass will be used to transfer logs to the water after timber harvest. No new LTF's will be constructed for the harvest of the Selected Alternative.
6. This Record of Decision identifies mitigation measures authorized to reduce or eliminate adverse environmental effects of the timber harvest and road construction activities specified in the Selected Alternative. Chapter 2 of the Final EIS specifies the monitoring that will be conducted to determine if the resource management objectives are being met.
7. I have identified certain lands that contain important wildlife habitat and that have received special consideration during the development of the Selected Alternative. These areas are shown on the Final EIS Project Area map and are described as Old-Growth Retention Areas as required under TLMP (1979, as amended). No harvest is proposed within these areas.
8. I have determined that there may be a significant possibility of a significant restriction of subsistence use of Sitka black-tailed deer in the Project Area in the future, due primarily to cumulative effects and a projected increase in the consumptive demand for deer. The 1996 TLMP Draft Revision revised deer Habitat Capability Model was analyzed for the Lab Bay alternatives (Appendix P of Final EIS). The results of the new model show a similar trend



of decreasing habitat capability for Project Area WAA's and communities to that estimated by the 1991 deer model (Chapter 3 of Final EIS). There is also a significant possibility of a significant restriction of subsistence use of black bear and otter in the Project Area. This is due primarily to existing resource conditions (lack of habitat), and for bear, an apparent increase in non-subsistence hunting effort. These effects are not related to the proposed action.

I have taken reasonable steps to minimize adverse impacts on subsistence uses and resources. This was a major factor in my decision, especially in regard to the communities most at risk from such effects (Point Baker, Port Protection, and Whale Pass). The Selected Alternative was specifically designed to avoid harvest and road construction in areas of high subsistence use and in high value wildlife areas. No harvest is proposed north of Road 20 between Red Bay and Protection Head. Also, no harvest is proposed in VCU's 527 and 538, and very limited harvest is proposed in VCU's 531.1 and 536. An uneven-aged management plan will be implemented on Thorne Island to reduce the impacts of harvest and road construction on wildlife habitat. Additional measures to reduce the effects of timber harvest on wildlife and subsistence include: developing and implementing an old-growth retention strategy that is consistent with current thinking in conservation biology; reducing the amount of clearcutting and prescribing clearcuts that maintain greater structural diversity; and closing selected roads to normal vehicular traffic after timber harvest to minimize effects on black bear and other species. Further, the Selected Alternative is necessary, consistent with sound management of public lands, and involves the minimum amount of public lands necessary to accomplish the purpose and need.

9. The Selected Alternative does not propose timber harvest on high vulnerability karst, and includes proposed harvest on only 138 acres of moderate and low vulnerability karst. Approximately 0.1 mile of road would be constructed through high vulnerability karst. Appropriate mitigation has been prescribed. This alternative meets the Federal Cave Resources Protection Act by providing for the protection of caves designated as significant.
10. The Selected Alternative avoids harvest in domestic supply watersheds. Public comments identified concerns regarding the potential effects of timber harvest in the area near the watersheds for Port Protection, Whales Resort, and near several homes in the Whale Pass community.
11. The Selected Alternative avoids harvest in key visual zones. Several areas were identified during field studies as either highly sensitive to visual disturbance, or as having reached the cumulative visual disturbance threshold. These areas included Calder Bay, Salmon Bay, Red Bay, and Whale Pass. In addition, concerns for visuals resources contributed to the development of an uneven-aged management plan for Thorne Island.
12. Forest Plan direction may change for this Project Area as a result of the Final Forest Plan Revision. The Selected Alternative for the Lab Bay Project is specifically designed to be completely compatible with the anticipated Final Revised Forest Plan's land allocations and standards and guidelines.

## Reasons for Decision

1. In making my decision, I worked hard to assure consideration of all issues and to take into account the competing interests and values of the public. There were many divergent public, personal, and professional opinions expressed during this project. This decision will probably not completely satisfy any one particular group or individual. However, I considered all views, and I believe the decision I have made is reasonable. The Selected Alternative provides a beneficial mix of resources for the public within the framework of the existing laws, regulations, policies, public needs and desires, and capabilities of the land, while helping to meet the stated purpose and need for this project.

2. My decision to implement this Selected Alternative is in conformance with the Tongass Land Management Plan (TLMP 1979, as amended), and sound National Forest management. The proposed management action is consistent with the direction proposed in the preferred alternatives of both the 1991 and 1996 TLMP Draft Revisions. I have considered the need to help maintain a current timber supply to KPC, as required by the KPC contract. I have also considered the need to provide strong conservation measures for fish, wildlife, and other resources important to subsistence, recreation, commercial, and other uses.
3. I have selected Alternative 6 with modifications over the other alternatives because it best approximates the purpose and need of the project while providing for a balance of economic and resource conservation considerations. The selection of this alternative is appropriate at this time due to the number of contributing environmental and regulatory concerns, and standards and guidelines, that must be achieved in the Lab Bay Project Area. These include: 1) standards and guidelines limiting the cumulative amount of harvest within watersheds and viewsheds for protection of water quality, fisheries, and visuals resources; 2) TTRA proportional harvest requirements; 3) the protection of high value subsistence use areas; 4) water quality issues near domestic water sources; 5) old-growth retention strategies; 6) the protection of high vulnerability karst ecosystems.
4. I have determined that the harvest volume of the Selected Alternative approximately meets the purpose and need defined for the project.
5. The Selected Alternative avoids harvest and minimizes road construction on high vulnerability karstlands. The Selected Alternative also allows us to keep options available regarding karst ecosystem management strategies under consideration in the 1996 TLMP Draft Revision.
6. The old-growth retention strategy associated with the Selected Alternative assures that options are available to address the short and long-term maintenance of well distributed viable wildlife populations, especially for species that require old-growth habitat. I have deferred timber harvest within the Old-Growth Retention Areas identified on the Final EIS Project Area Map. These areas include the majority of the large, unfragmented blocks of old growth that have been identified as having high value for wildlife. My objective is to maintain their integrity for as long as possible as we continue to learn more about old-growth dependent species, and to maintain options for various viable population strategies being considered in the 1996 TLMP Draft Revision.

The Old-Growth Retention Areas designated for the project contain sufficient acreage of old-growth habitat to meet the requirements of the Old Growth prescription specified in the 1979 Tongass Land Management Plan (as amended). No harvest will occur in these areas during this entry; however, subsequent projects and NEPA analysis may specify changes in the locations of these areas. The proposed Old-Growth Retention Areas meet the criteria for size, spacing, and distribution recommended by the Interagency Viable Populations Committee, and are consistent with the old-growth retention strategy proposed in the 1996 TLMP Draft Revision.

7. The Selected Alternative is consistent with the proportional harvest requirements specified in the Tongass Timber Reform Act (TTRA) as outlined in the Forest Service Timber Sale Preparation Handbook. The proposed harvest units include only 130 acres of Volume Classes 6 and 7 in Management Area K01. No Volume Class 6 and 7 is proposed for harvest in Management Areas K02 and K03. The Selected Alternative improves the proportion of high volume present in all Management Areas compared to existing conditions. The proportionality analysis for the Selected Alternative is presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1

**Proportionality Analysis by Management Area (Acreage-based Handbook Method)**

Time Period/Alt.	MA	Acres		Percent	Change from Base
		VC4-7	VC6-7		
Dec. 31, 1990 (Base)	K01	32,101	11,960	37.26	
Dec. 31, 1994	K01	30,369	11,253	37.05	-0.20
Selected Alternative	K01	894	130		
Result	K01	29,475	11,124	37.74	0.48
Dec. 31, 1990 (Base)	K02	7,140	1,663	23.29	
Dec. 31, 1994	K02	6,305	1,407	22.31	-0.98
Selected Alternative	K02	155	0		
Result	K02	6,150	1,407	22.87	-0.41
Dec. 31, 1990 (Base)	K03	39,592	7,213	18.22	
Dec. 31, 1994	K03	36,943	6,407	17.34	-0.87
CPOW Units	K03	321	0		
New Total	K03	36,622	6,407	17.50	-0.72
Selected Alternative	K03	825	0		
Result	K03	35,797	6,407	17.90	-0.32

Source: Lab Bay Planning Record

The current methodology for conducting proportionality analysis, based upon acres and the timber type map, has been called into question by an April 1994 court decision, *Wildlife Society et al. v. Barton*, J93-001 CV (D. Alaska). In response, the Forest Service has been evaluating alternatives to the timber type map for determining proportionality of harvest. Updated Forest Service Handbook guidelines are being developed as part of settlement discussions with the lawsuit parties. While updated guidelines are being developed, proportionality analysis will follow the implementation procedures in Forest Service Handbook 2409.18, R10 Supplement No. 2409.18-93-3.

A transition method of calculating proportionality has been developed to provide an estimate based on volume rather than acres. The transition method has not been approved by the Regional Forester, nor has it been documented in the Forest Service Handbook. The proportionality of the Selected Alternative has been calculated using the transition method and the results are shown in Table 2. These results are shown for informational purposes only and are not part of the decision-making process.

Final proportionality for the Lab Bay Sale will be calculated upon completion of timber harvest for each offering area. The method of calculation will be dependent upon the outcome of the current settlement negotiations.



Table 2

**Proportionality Analysis by Management Area (Volume-based transition method)**

Time Period/Alt.	MA	Volume (mbf)		Percent	Change from Base
		Total Vol.	High Vol.		
Dec. 31, 1990 (Base)	K01	1,071,777	829,885	77.43	
Dec. 31, 1994	K01	1,011,241	782,546	77.38	-0.05
Selected Alternative	K01	25,731	7,326		
Result	K01	985,510	775,220	78.66	1.23
Dec. 31, 1990 (Base)	K02	211,507	138,218	65.35	
Dec. 31, 1994	K02	185,168	118,880	64.20	-1.15
Selected Alternative	K02	3,820	0		
Result	K02	181,348	118,880	65.55	0.20
Dec. 31, 1990 (Base)	K03	1,103,087	657,313	59.59	
Dec. 31, 1994	K03	1,016,405	593,827	58.42	-1.16
CPOW Units	K03	6,992	953		
New Total	K03	1,009,413	592,874	58.73	-0.85
Selected Alternative	K03	17,645	572		
Result	K03	991,768	592,302	59.72	0.13

Source: Lab Bay Planning Record

8. I have ensured that all alternatives, including the Selected Alternative, meet the adopted visual quality objectives (VQO's) for Priority Travel Routes and Use Areas. These Priority Travel Routes and Use Area viewsheds include: Alaska Marine Highway and Cruiseship Route, Beach Areas in the northwest corner of the Project Area, Labouchere Bay, Port Protection, Red Bay, Red Lake, Salmon Bay, Salmon Bay Lake, Exchange Cove, Whale Passage, and West Coast Waterway.
9. I have designed the Selected Alternative so that no created openings exceed 100 acres.
10. In the development of the Selected Alternative, I have taken action to implement the Chief's policy on ecosystem management and a reduction in clearcutting. I have specified that approximately 373 acres will be harvested using partial cutting silvicultural treatments to provide for greater structural diversity on a stand level, promote regeneration (especially western red cedar and yellowcedar), maintain riparian habitat, maintain scenic quality, and leave young, vigorously growing trees. Partial cutting is a relatively new silvicultural system in Southeast Alaska. However, the units for which partial cutting is prescribed were identified and designed to ensure the success of the regeneration. Prescriptions include removing a portion of the trees within the unit, while retaining individual trees, and/or groups of trees. Harvest types are described in the Silviculture, Timber and Vegetation discussion in Chapter 3 of the Final EIS. The harvest type descriptions and diagrams provide the conceptual framework for management of the units; however, implementation of the harvest types may vary as needed to meet individual unit prescriptions and harvest objectives. The unit-specific harvest objectives are described in the Unit Design Cards and the Integrated Silvicultural Prescriptions (Planning Record). Silviculture and logging system specialists will apply this direction in the preparation of the units for harvest. Sale administrators will ensure that the logging operations accomplish the harvest objectives for these units. Implementation of these prescriptions is intended to add to our knowledge of alternate treatments for Southeast Alaska timber types.
11. All remaining timber harvest in the Selected Alternative is prescribed for clearcut harvest. Clearcutting meets the objective of maintaining fast growing, mistletoe-free stands of mixed

species and is the optimum method of harvesting. However, all clearcut units incorporate ecosystem management principals by prescribing reserve trees to enhance structural diversity. Four types of clearcuts are planned based on the amount of reserve trees left within a unit. The specific objectives for each unit are listed in the Harvest Unit Design Cards and Integrated Silvicultural Prescriptions.

13. The Selected Alternative will provide a reasonable economic return to the Federal Government while still meeting the previously mentioned resource objectives. The average mid-market stumpage value for the Selected Alternative is approximately \$52.71 per thousand board feet. A stumpage value analysis was also completed using the current market value to show the relationship between the current market and the historical market prices. The current market stumpage value for the Selected Alternative is approximately \$177.71 per thousand board feet.
14. The Selected Alternative defers harvest on several units located adjacent to private land in the Whale Pass and Point Baker/Port Protection areas. The decision to defer harvest on these units reflects concern for karst resources, water supply, visuals, and subsistence uses, as expressed in public comments on the Draft EIS, and preserves options for future land use management decisions.

## How Issues Are Addressed

In the following summary, I detail how the Selected Alternative addresses each of the significant issues. Refer to Chapter 2 of the Final EIS to supplement the following discussion and provide a comparison of the proposed activities and environmental consequences of the alternatives.

### Issue 1: Timber

The Selected Alternative was designed to contribute timber volume to the KPC Contract and/or the Independent Sale Program while reflecting concerns regarding the amount and location of previous harvest, old-growth habitat, proportional harvest under TTRA, wildlife and subsistence use, karst ecosystem, and visuals and recreation resources in the Project Area.

The Selected Alternative will harvest approximately 2,040 acres of commercial forest land, and associated road rights-of-way. Harvest will yield approximately 35.7 MMBF of timber volume from harvest units, and approximately 6.5 MMBF from road rights-of-way, for a total of approximately 42.2 MMBF. Additionally, it authorizes new road construction on approximately 30 miles of road, and the reconstruction of 4 miles of road.

The Selected Alternative is consistent with the proportional harvest requirements of the Tongass Timber Reform Act (TTRA) and improves the proportion of high volume present in all Management Areas of the Project Area compared to existing conditions.

Information regarding the future availability of timber on Prince of Wales Island and the scheduling of timber harvest in the Ketchikan Area is available in the 1996 TLMP Draft Revision.

### Issue 2: Subsistence

The Selected Alternative was designed to be responsive to public concerns for maintenance of high-quality wildlife habitat and subsistence use of the Project Area. Public and agency comments received during scoping, EIS development, and Draft EIS ANILCA hearings were carefully considered in the selection of units for the Selected Alternative and the individual unit design and prescription. A number of measures were incorporated into the Selected Alternative to minimize adverse impacts on subsistence uses and resources. These include avoiding harvest and road construction in areas of high subsistence use and in high value wildlife areas, developing and implementing an old-growth retention strategy that is consistent with current thinking in conservation biology, reducing the amount of clearcutting and prescribing clearcuts that maintain greater structural diversity, and closing selected roads to normal vehicular traffic after timber harvest.



Chapter 3 of the Final EIS contains the ANILCA 810 subsistence analysis. The analysis concludes that all alternatives, including the No Action Alternative, may have a significant possibility of a significant restriction on the subsistence use of Sitka black-tail deer, black bear, and river otter. Potential effects on river otter are due primarily to existing conditions and projected cumulative effects, and not the proposed action. Thus, for river otter, the effects of all alternatives are essentially the same. Potential effects on black bear and Sitka black-tailed deer are due to both existing condition/cumulative effects and direct project-specific effects. For black bear, potential direct project-specific effects are related to increased access for non-subsistence hunters provided by new roads, exacerbating the effects of the existing condition/cumulative effects. Alternatives with fewer new roads and without the Calder Tie Road have the least potential to foster these effects. For Sitka black-tailed deer, potential direct project-specific effects are due to habitat degradation, increased access to, and competition for, deer within various community subsistence use areas, and impingement upon the subsistence life-style values of some Project Area residents.

While all alternatives could potentially affect the subsistence use of deer by the communities of Coffman Cove, Craig, Klawock, Wrangell, Point Baker, Port Protection, and Whale Pass, the effects of the Selected Alternative are significantly less than for any of the other action alternatives (essentially equal to Alternative 6; See Chapter 3, Subsistence). Except for Point Baker, Port Protection, and Whale Pass all potential effects of the Selected Alternative are primarily related to cumulative (past, multi-project) rather than to direct (project-specific) effects. Direct effects of the Selected Alternative on the resource use patterns of these three communities would be significantly less than of the other action alternatives (again, essentially the same as those of Alternative 6).

The Selected Alternative reflects efforts by the Forest Service to minimize effects on subsistence resources used by those rural communities that would be most likely to receive the highest priority for game in the event of an ANILCA Section 804, Tier II restriction. The Selected Alternative avoids timber harvest in the area north of Road 20 and west of Red Bay. No harvest is proposed in VCU's 527 and 538, and very limited harvest is proposed in VCU's 531.1 and 536. The Selected Alternative defers harvest on several units located adjacent to private land in the Whale Pass and Point Baker/Port Protection areas. The decision to defer harvest on these units reflects public comments regarding subsistence, wildlife, and other resources. An uneven-aged management plan will be implemented on Thorne Island to reduce the impacts of harvest and road construction on wildlife habitat.

### Issue 3: Wildlife and Biodiversity

The Selected Alternative was designed to be responsive to public and agency concerns regarding maintenance of old-growth habitat and protection of high quality wildlife and subsistence use areas. A number of measures were incorporated into the Selected Alternative to minimize adverse impacts on wildlife and their habitats. These include avoiding harvest and road construction in high value wildlife areas, developing and implementing an old-growth retention strategy that is consistent with current thinking in conservation biology, reducing the amount of clearcutting and prescribing clearcuts that maintain greater structural diversity, and closing selected roads to vehicular traffic after timber harvest. In addition, individual units were field-verified, allowing identification and protection of important habitat elements, such as denning sites.

Implementation of the Selected Alternative will directly affect wildlife habitats through the conversion of old-growth forest to younger seral stages. The Selected Alternative will reduce old-growth habitat in the Project Area by approximately 2 percent. Special emphasis habitats such as estuary and beach fringe are protected through timber harvest unit design and road location. All alternatives would result in impacts consistent with implementation of the TLMP (1979, as amended), the TLMP Draft Revision (1991a), and the 1996 TLMP Draft Revision.

The Selected Alternative will not affect wildlife habitat capability relative to current conditions for black bear, river otter, and bald eagle, as estimated using 1991 Habitat Capability Models. Hairy woodpecker will experience a decrease in habitat capability of approximately 2.5 percent. Sitka black-tailed deer habitat capability would be reduced by 1.1 percent relative to current



conditions. Habitat capability modelling does not necessarily indicate current or future populations, but rather is a means to estimate potential effects on habitat. The results of the Lab Bay analysis are consistent with the trends predicted for wildlife species in the 1996 TLMP Draft Revision. Threatened or endangered species would not be affected.

Forest fragmentation is another indicator of potential effects on wildlife. All action alternatives would reduce the frequency and size of large, unfragmented old-growth patches. The Selected Alternative will have the least effect on old-growth patches, reducing the number of old-growth patches in the 500- to 1,000-acre size class from six (current condition) to five.

The retention strategy associated with the Selected Alternative is shown on the Final EIS Project Area Map. Timber harvest is deferred within these Old-Growth Retention Areas, which encompass the majority of the large, contiguous blocks of old-growth with high wildlife value. This strategy will maintain options for various viable population strategies being considered in the 1996 TLMP Draft Revision. The old-growth retention areas designated for the project contain sufficient acreage of old-growth habitat to meet the requirements of the Old Growth prescription specified in the 1979 Tongass Land Management Plan (as amended).

#### **Issue 4: Fish Habitat and Water Quality**

The Selected Alternative reflects public and agency concerns for water quality and fisheries resources in the Project Area. All units in close proximity to known domestic supply watersheds have been deferred from the Selected Alternative. Field verification of units and roads was performed to identify road locations and unit boundaries with the least potential to impact streams and fisheries. A soils scientist inspected and prescribed mitigation for all units and roads with high mass movement index soils.

The potential effects on fish habitat and water quality are minimal for all action alternatives. All alternatives meet the requirements and the intent of the Clean Water Act and the Tongass Timber Reform Act. Implementation of the TTRA requirement to provide a minimum 100-foot buffer on Class I streams and Class II streams flowing directly into Class I streams, and the additional buffer requirements identified in the standards and guidelines of the TLMP Draft Revision (1991a) will effectively mitigate direct stream channel impacts from proposed timber harvest and road construction activities. Adherence to Best Management Practices (BMP's) outlined in the Soil and Water Conservation Handbook (FSH 2509.22) during timber harvest and road construction activities will minimize the potential for impacts on fish habitat. BMP's are noted on individual Harvest Unit Design Cards and Road Cards.

No significant changes in stream temperature regimens, large woody debris recruitment, or stream nutrient cycles are expected as a result of the action alternatives. Riparian buffers and stream crossings as prescribed on the Unit Design Cards and Road Cards will minimize any adverse effects on water quality and fish habitat resulting from the authorized activities. The Selected Alternative will require the fewest number of crossings of Class I and II streams of the action alternatives.

The Selected Alternative meets the cumulative watershed disturbance standards and guidelines of the TLMP Draft Revision (1991a). All action alternatives will limit the amount of cumulative watershed disturbance within each third order or larger watershed to less than 35 percent of the total watershed land base within a 15-year period. The Selected Alternative will not exceed the High Gradient Contained zone cumulative harvest guidelines in any watersheds. Other action alternatives would exceed this guideline; however, mitigation is proposed.

Each watershed proposed for harvest under the Lab Bay sale was reviewed to determine the extent of past harvest and road building; extent of high and very high MMI soils; riparian resources; and fisheries concerns including passage, temperature sensitivity, and access. The level of proposed harvest and specific harvest unit prescriptions take into account existing watershed conditions as well as site-specific conditions within and adjacent to the units. These investigations incorporated the elements of watershed analysis recommended in the AFHA Report and the 1996 TLMP Draft Revision preferred alternative.

The Lab Bay harvest units and roads were field-verified by resource specialists who designated sites for implementation of required mitigation measures. These specialists were also given the authority to recommend additional mitigation measures as appropriate to the site, such as extending TTRA no-harvest buffers to include adjacent floodplains, muskegs, or forested habitats for protection of wildlife/fisheries/water quality; specifying selective harvest or individual tree harvest buffers to reduce blowdown potential and for protection of fisheries/water quality; and specifying split-yarding and/or full suspension on Class III streams and V-notches as appropriate to protect water quality. These mitigation measures go beyond the minimum requirements of the Forest Plan, and offer increased protection of fisheries and water quality resources in accordance with the recommendations in the AFHA Report. These measures also are consistent with the increased level of protection recommended for riparian areas under Alternative 3 (preferred) of the 1996 TLMP Draft Revision. Even with implementation of the measures recommended in AFHA report, the 1996 TLMP Draft Revision analysis discloses that some increased risk to fish habitat is expected. Additional information on site-specific mitigation for the Lab Bay units and roads is available in the unit cards, road cards, the Soil and Water Resource Report, and the Fisheries and Riparian Areas Resource Report (Planning Record).

The action alternatives will result in minimal localized effects on the marine environment at the sites of the Log Transfer Facilities (LTF's). Only existing LTF's will be used for the harvest and transport of timber under the Selected Alternative. The Selected Alternative meets the requirements and the intent of the Clean Water Act, Section 404 (b)(1), and the Tongass Timber Reform Act. Adherence to Best Management Practices (BMP's) outlined in the Soil and Water Conservation Handbook (FSH 2509.22) during transfer and rafting activities will minimize the potential for impacts on the marine environment.

### Issue 5: Recreation

The Selected Alternative reflects public and agency concerns for maintenance of recreation opportunities in the Project Area. Units that would be highly visible from existing Recreation Places and communities are deferred from the Selected Alternative. Many units visible from shorelines and waterways are prescribed for specific selective harvest treatments to reduce their visibility. Thorne Island will be harvested under an uneven-aged management plan to minimize the effects to recreation and other resources. The Road Access Management Plan incorporates concerns for maintenance of access to roaded use sites, maintenance of Primitive and Semi-Primitive sites, and maintenance of options for future recreational access.

The action alternatives would not change recreation settings or activities for the majority of the 48 inventoried Recreation Places in the Project Area. The Selected Alternative will cause the least change of the action alternatives, resulting in slight changes to three inventoried Recreation Places. The areas to be affected are Exchange Cove, Salmon Bay Lake, and the Calder Bay/Calder Mountain Area. Chapter 3 of the Final EIS describes the effects in detail. The Selected Alternative will shift approximately 20,000 acres from Primitive, Semi-Primitive Nonmotorized, Semi-Primitive Motorized, and Roaded Natural recreational uses to Roaded Modified uses.

All of the action alternatives propose timber harvest within previously unharvested and unroaded areas. The Selected Alternative will result in the fewest acres of harvest and miles of newly constructed road within previously roadless areas.

### Issue 6: Visuals

The Selected Alternative reflects public and agency concerns for visual resources in the Project Area. Units with the greatest potential for impacts to existing Priority Travel Routes, Use Areas, and communities are deferred from the Selected Alternative. Many units visible from shorelines and waterways are prescribed for specific selective harvest treatments to reduce their visibility.

All alternatives would meet the Visual Quality Objectives (VQO's) for the eight identified Priority Travel Routes and Use Areas. The Selected Alternative will have the least impact on visual resources, with 7 units harvested in 3 Priority Travel Route and Use Area viewsheds. Thorne Island, within the Whale Pass viewshed, will be harvested under an uneven-aged management plan to minimize effects to visual resources.



## Issue 7: Social and Economic Factors

This issue reflects concern about economic development and employment, and about maintaining Alaskan lifestyles. Social and economic effects are important to the Forest Service in land management decisions. Land use designations, scheduling of activities, and rural development program decisions are all made with consideration of social and economic effects.

The Selected Alternative produces an average mid-market stumpage value of approximately \$52.71 per thousand board feet. The current market stumpage value for the Selected Alternative is approximately \$177.71 per thousand board feet. Actual returns from the harvest will be determined for the offering based on current market conditions as determined through the Timber Sale Appraisal process. The Selected Alternative provides raw materials to support the Southeast Alaska timber industry. Harvest of this level will support approximately 62 jobs during year three of the four year harvest period.

The Selected Alternative is not projected to have any effect on income or employment opportunities in the sport or commercial fishing industries or those related economic sectors. Because the Selected Alternative affects few recreation sites, unroaded areas, and areas important for tourism, no significant impact is expected on employment and income opportunities in the recreation and tourism industry.

An analysis of the social and economic effects related to changes in the timber supply is discussed in the 1996 TLMP Draft Revision.

## Issue 8: Karst

The Selected Alternative was designed to avoid harvest on high vulnerability karst. A karst vulnerability assessment was completed for the Project Area and all proposed units on high vulnerability karst have been deferred from the Selected Alternative. Field investigations documented a small number of poorly to moderately developed sinkholes in three harvest units of the Selected Alternative (532-219, 534-228, and 539-222). These features are broadly dispersed over gentle slopes and at low elevations with deep soils and are not classified as high vulnerability. Approximately 0.1 mile of road would be constructed through high vulnerability karst. Mitigation measures will be implemented in the three units and along the 0.1 mile of road 65-76-07 to protect karst resources. In addition, field crews will be instructed to look for cave or karst resources during unit and road layout. Any significant karst resources that are identified during final layout will be protected by application of appropriate standards and guidelines.

## Public Involvement

Public involvement has been instrumental in the identification and clarification of issues for this project. This has been helpful in the formulation of alternatives and has assisted me in making informed decisions for the Lab Bay Project. Public mailings, Federal Register notices, news releases, open houses, subsistence hearings, and group and individual meetings were some of the tools used to solicit public input for the project. Public scoping and involvement activities for the Lab Bay Project are described in Chapter 1 of the Final EIS. Public comments on the Draft EIS and Forest Service responses are presented in Appendix O.

## Coordination With Other Agencies

From the time scoping was initiated, meetings and other contacts with interested State and Federal agencies have occurred. Issues were discussed and information was exchanged. Chapter 4 of the Final EIS identifies the agencies who were informed of and/or involved in the planning process (see List of Agencies, Organizations, and Individuals to Whom Copies of this Statement Were Sent).

In addition to consultation conducted prior to publication of the Draft EIS, my staff held information meetings with State and Federal agencies during preparation of the Final EIS. Ketchikan Area, Thorne Bay Ranger District, and contractor personnel met with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in Ketchikan on December 12, 1995 to discuss comments on the Draft EIS. A

Coastal Zone Management Plan consistency meeting was held with state agency representatives on April 29, 1996 in Ketchikan.

## Description of Alternatives

A number of alternatives were examined, but not considered for detailed study in this EIS. This section summarizes those alternatives and the rationale for not considering them further. For a more complete description of these alternatives, refer to Chapter 2 of the Final EIS.

### Alternatives Considered but Eliminated from Detailed Analysis

#### Preliminary Alternative B

Preliminary Alternative B was designed to harvest the maximum volume the Project Area can provide at this time. It included 181 harvest units and would provide approximately 180 MMBF of timber. It was not considered in detail because it harvested a disproportionate amount of Volume Class 6 and 7 timber in Management Areas K02 and K03 and would not be in compliance with the TTRA proportionality requirement. Alternative 2, the unit pool, is based on Alternative B with high volume class units in MA's K02 and K03 deferred from harvest at this time.

#### Preliminary Alternative D

Preliminary Alternative D, which emphasized timber-related economic benefits, did not meet mandated proportionality requirements and, in addition, did not show a clear economic superiority over other alternatives. This alternative was dropped from further consideration.

### Alternatives Considered in Detail

Five action alternatives for making timber available from the Lab Bay Project Area and one No Action alternative was considered in detail. Each action alternative is consistent with the TLMP (1979, as amended) and Alternative P of the TLMP Draft Revision (1991a). This section provides a discussion of the framework of each alternative and various resource outputs associated with its implementation. For a summary of the environmental consequences of each alternative, refer to Chapter 2 of the Final EIS.

#### Alternative 1 (No Action)

**Framework:** This alternative would result in no new timber harvest or road construction in the Lab Bay Project Area. Under this alternative, replacement timber volume to satisfy the requirement of the KPC contract would probably not be available from elsewhere within the Ketchikan Area. The CEQ regulations 40 CFR 1502.14d require a "No Action" alternative be analyzed in every EIS to serve as a benchmark by which effects of the action alternatives are to be measured.

**Outputs:** There are no new timber harvest outputs associated with this alternative.

#### Alternative 2

**Framework:** Alternative 2 includes all proposed units that are feasible to harvest at this time under Federal and State laws and Forest-wide standards and guidelines.

**Outputs:** Implementation of Alternative 2 would result in the harvest of approximately 101 MMBF of timber from 125 harvest units. This volume would be harvested from approximately 4,550 acres and includes 18 MMBF of timber from the clearing of approximately 80 miles of new road. One new Log Transfer Facility would be constructed for the proposed harvest on Thorne Island. Payments to the State of Alaska are estimated at \$4.8 million and approximately 156 direct jobs would be created over a 3-year time period.

#### Alternative 3

**Framework:** The framework for Alternative 3 emphasizes the protection of high vulnerability karst resources and Habitat Conservation Areas (HCA's) as defined in the 1994 Draft Interim Habitat Management Guidelines EA (USDA Forest Service 1994b) (hereafter referred to as Draft Interim-designated HCA's). Under this alternative, no harvest is proposed on high vulner-



ability karst areas, as mapped in the 1994 Karst Vulnerability Assessment Report. In addition, no harvest would occur within the Draft Interim-designated HCA's.

**Outputs:** Implementation of Alternative 3 would result in the harvest of approximately 66 MMBF of timber from 83 harvest units. This volume would be harvested from approximately 3,050 acres and includes 12 MMBF of timber from the clearing of approximately 55 miles of new roads. One new Log Transfer Facility would be constructed for the proposed harvest of Thorne Island. Payments to the State of Alaska are estimated at \$3.0 million and approximately 102 direct jobs would be created over a 3-year period.

#### Alternative 4

**Framework:** The framework for Alternative 4 is based on harvesting timber while protecting blocks of wildlife habitat and travel corridors. No harvest is proposed within the Lab Bay Project-defined contiguous old-growth areas (COGA's). These COGA's were designed based on Project-specific habitat information. Timber harvest would be allowed within proposed wildlife corridors and managed on a 195-year rotation. Within Project-defined COGA's, 2.4 miles of new road would be constructed. An additional 4.5 miles would be constructed within Project-defined corridors. All new roads within COGA's and corridors are proposed for closure after completion of harvest. Under this alternative, timber harvest on Thorne Island will be conducted according to an uneven-aged management plan using helicopter yarding methods (as described in Appendix E). No Log Transfer Facility or roads would be constructed on Thorne Island under this alternative.

**Outputs:** Implementation of Alternative 4 would result in the harvest of approximately 62 MMBF of timber from 78 conventional harvest units and one uneven-aged management unit. This volume would be harvested from approximately 3,100 acres and includes 11 MMBF of timber from the clearing of approximately 50 miles of new roads. Payments to the State of Alaska are estimated at \$2.4 million and approximately 95 direct jobs would be created over a 3-year period.

#### Alternative 5

**Framework:** This alternative is designed to harvest groups of units that fall within common geographical areas. Units were selected with consideration for cost-effectiveness of road construction as well as haul distance.

**Outputs:** Implementation of Alternative 5 would result in the harvest of approximately 69 MMBF of timber from 85 units. This volume would be harvested from approximately 3,100 acres and includes 13 MMBF of timber from the clearing of approximately 60 miles of new roads. One new Log Transfer Facility would be constructed for the harvest proposed on Thorne Island. Payments to the State of Alaska are estimated at \$3.1 million and approximately 107 direct jobs would be created over a 3-year time period.

#### Alternative 6

**Framework:** Alternative 6 emphasizes the protection of high vulnerability karst resources and high value subsistence, wildlife, and visual resources. Under this alternative, no harvest is proposed on high vulnerability karst areas, as mapped in the 1994 Karst Vulnerability Assessment Report, unless field verification indicates the effects of harvest can be effectively mitigated.

Many areas with high subsistence use and high wildlife value were deferred from Alternative 6. Entry into large, currently unfragmented, COGA's was minimized by placing harvest units at the outside edge of blocks. No harvest units are located within the Draft Interim HCA's. The Old-Growth Retention Areas maintained under this alternative are depicted on the Final EIS Project Area Map. Units with a high level of visual impact near important recreation and residential areas were excluded from this alternative. Timber harvest on Thorne Island will be conducted according to an uneven-aged management plan using helicopter yarding methods (as described in Appendix E). No Log Transfer Facility or roads would be constructed on Thorne Island. Construction of the Calder Tie Road would not occur under this alternative.

**Outputs:** Implementation of Alternative 6 would result in the harvest of approximately 40 MMBF of timber from 46 conventional harvest units and one uneven-aged management unit. This volume would be harvested from approximately 1,900 acres and includes 6 MMBF of timber from the clearing of approximately 29 miles of new road. Payments to the State of Alaska are estimated at \$1.8 million and approximately 62 direct jobs would be created over a 3-year period.

### Environmentally Preferred Alternative

There is no single factor that can be used to determine which alternative is environmentally preferred. Maintaining the basic productivity of the land and the quality of the lifestyles of local residents are vitally important.

Based on the comparison of the alternatives shown in the Table 2-3 of the Final EIS, Alternative 1, the No Action alternative, would cause the least environmental disturbance and is therefore the environmentally preferred alternative of all the alternatives considered in detail.

Of the action alternatives, Alternative 6 would cause the least adverse environmental effects because of the lower number of miles of road and acres harvested, protection of high vulnerability karst resources, the old growth retention strategy, the protection of domestic watersheds, the deferral of harvest in high use subsistence areas, and the deferral of harvest in areas of high visual sensitivity. The Selected Alternative (Alternative 6 with modifications) will have only slightly greater effects to the environment than Alternative 6. Either of these alternatives would cause significantly lower adverse environmental effects than alternatives 2, 3, 4, and 5.

## Planning Record

The Planning Record for this project includes the Draft EIS, Final EIS, Tongass Land Management Plan, Alaska Regional Guide, all material incorporated by reference, and all documents produced during the environmental analysis of this project. The Planning Record is available for review at the Forest Supervisor's Office, Ketchikan, Alaska.

## Mitigation

Mitigation measures are prescribed to avoid, minimize, or correct for the adverse effects of actions. These measures were applied in the development of the project alternatives, including the Selected Alternative, through avoidance of specific geographic areas and in the design of the harvest units and road corridors. The Mitigation Measures section of Chapter 2 of the Final EIS discusses the mitigation measures for all alternatives.

Mitigation measures applicable to the Selected Alternative include the mitigation measures contained in the standards and guidelines of the Tongass Land Management Plan of 1979 (as amended), the Tongass Land Management Plan Draft Revision (1991a), the Alaska Regional Guide, and applicable Forest Service Manuals and Handbooks. The Planning Record includes Unit Design Cards and Road Cards which incorporate site-specific mitigation. These measures are adopted as part of this decision. Integrated silvicultural prescriptions have also been developed, which further specify mitigation direction for each unit. A sample of these prescriptions is included in Appendix G.

All practical means to avoid or minimize adverse environmental effects of the Selected Alternative have been adopted. Measures have been included to protect, enhance, and restore resources affected by timber harvest and related actions. The Forest Service has the authority through the KPC contract and other permit requirements or authorities, to enforce and implement adopted mitigation measures and the monitoring necessary to ensure the effectiveness of the mitigation. The site-specific mitigation measures listed in Table 3 are authorized for application to the Lab Bay Project Area. The specific units in which the measures apply are listed in Appendix C of the Final EIS, as well as on the Unit and Road Cards.



Table 3

**Site-Specific Mitigation Measures Incorporated Into Unit and Road Design**

Mitigation Measure	Description	Number of Units Affected in Selected Alternative
<b>Karst</b>		
K1	Geotechnical investigation, including dye tracing required to evaluate potential adverse effects on recharge area to domestic water supply.	0
K2	Modify unit boundary to avoid slopes in excess of 70% or to retain areas of greater than 70% on recharge area to domestic water supply.	0
K3	Achieve partial suspension due to steep slopes and/or thin soils on karst.	0
K4	Individual tree selection (Harvest Type I) due to high density of significant karst features (caves, vertical shafts, sinkholes, or insurgences).	0
K5	Avoid yarding over significant features (caves, vertical shafts, sinkholes, or insurgences).	2
K6	Maintain minimum 100-foot windfirm buffers around caves, vertical shafts, and other significant karst features.	2
K7	Directionally fall away from significant karst features (caves, vertical shafts, sinkholes, or insurgences)	2
K8	Ketchikan Area karst resource specialist should review unit during final layout.	3
<b>Roads on Karst</b>		
Kr1	Geotechnical investigation including dye tracing required to evaluate potential adverse effects of road construction on recharge area to domestic water supply.	0
Kr2	Geotechnical investigation required to evaluate potential adverse effects of blasting on significant karst features, or to determine stability of road across karst.	0
Kr3	Avoid filling or channeling of road drainage into caves, vertical shafts, sinkholes, or insurgences.	1
Kr4	Avoid construction over significant karst features (caves, vertical shafts, sinkholes, or insurgences).	1
Kr5	Realign road to avoid significant features (caves, vertical shafts, sinkholes, or insurgences).	1
Kr6	Road eliminated due to karst concerns.	1
Kr7	Proposed road located on moderate or low vulnerability karst is not expected to adversely affect significant karst features. Ketchikan Area karst specialist should review the final road location and design to ensure protection of water quality. Protection measures may include avoiding construction over karst features, prohibiting water diversion to or from karst features, culvert placement and density, sediment retention, erosion prevention, or restrictions on blasting locations.	3
<b>Minerals</b>		
M1	Protect all known mineral improvements, such as mine claim markers.	0
M2	Reasonable access will be provided for mining claims.	3
<b>Fish, Water Quality, and Soils</b>		
F1	Modify unit boundaries/design to avoid very high mass movement areas and areas dominated by thin organic soils, or to minimize soil displacement, erosion, and sedimentation into streams (BMP's 13.2, 13.5).	30
F2	Avoid road construction in areas of very high mass movement potential (BMP's 14.2, 14.7).	1

Table 3

**Site-Specific Mitigation Measures Incorporated Into Unit and Road Design**

<b>Mitigation Measure</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Number of Units Affected in Selected Alternative</b>
F3	Require partial to full suspension logging systems to minimize high mass movement potential, and implement measures to minimize soil disturbance, erosion, or sedimentation into streams including seeding, slashing, or other stabilization measures (BMP's 12.7, 13.5, 13.7, 13.9, 13.12).	33
F4	Modify logging system to avoid or minimize damage to designated streams, muskegs, or other wetlands (BMP's 12.5, 13.2, 13.3, and 13.15).	5
F5	Establish no-harvest and selective-cut buffers along streams and around lakes to protect riparian management areas, fisheries, or for protection of temperature sensitive streams (BMP 12.6).	17
F6	Require split yarding and/or directional felling along selected Class III streams without buffers to maintain streambank stability and prevent sedimentation into stream channel (BMP 13.16).	12
F7	Implement measures to reduce surface erosion and drainage interruption related to transportation including water barring and cross-draining roads using ditches and culverts to prevent water running long distances over roads; closure, seeding, and fertilizing cut and fill slopes; and locating and designing landings for good drainage and dispersion of water (BMP's 12.7, 12.11, 13.10, 14.3, 14.5, 14.8, 14.9, 14.10, 14.11, 14.12, 14.13).	24
F8	Establish timing restrictions for instream road construction activities for protection of anadromous and resident fish in Class I, Class IIa, and other designated streams. Includes in-channel operations, stream crossings of temporary roads, bridge and culvert design and installation (BMP's 14.6, 14.10, 14.14, 14.16, 14.17).	16
F9	Implement BMP's for protection of water quality, riparian areas, and fisheries habitat on all stream crossings including riparian area protection, streambank protection, stream channel protection, road closure, and timely implementation of erosion control measures (BMP's 12.6, 12.7, 12.11, 13.16, 14.9, 14.11).	20
F10	Retain timber within High Gradient Contained stream RMA's within and adjacent to units to avoid exceedance of HGC harvest threshold.	3
<b>Vegetation and Timber</b>		
T1	Conduct partial-cut harvesting to provide shelter and retain a seed source in the unit, and/or to help maintain the cedar component in the future stand.	4
T2	Retain at least 2 yellowcedar trees per acre to provide an additional seed source within the unit.	1
T3	Implement measures such as retention areas or partial cutting to reduce regeneration concerns due to high elevation, low site productivity, shallow or saturated soils.	2
<b>Wildlife</b>		
W1	Provide for greater structural diversity on a stand level by retaining a minimum level of snags and green tree replacements. Typically, the minimum level will be met by retaining trees along unit boundaries and between settings where conditions allow. Identified for third and fourth order watersheds that currently meet or exceed the minimum snag density guidelines, and are not adjacent to extensive past harvest (Concern Level 1).	37
W2	Provide for greater structural diversity on a stand level by retaining a minimum level of snags and merchantable green tree replacements throughout the rotation. Typically, the minimum level will be met by retaining trees along stand edges and between setting boundaries, or within leave tree islands where conditions allow. Identified for third and fourth order watersheds that are at minimum snag density guideline, or are adjacent to extensive past harvest (Concern Level 2).	8

Table 3

**Site-Specific Mitigation Measures Incorporated Into Unit and Road Design**

Mitigation Measure	Description	Number of Units Affected in Selected Alternative
W3	Provide for greater structural diversity on a stand level by retaining a minimum level of snags and merchantable green tree replacements throughout the rotation. Typically, the minimum level will be met by retaining leave tree islands or by partial cut prescription where conditions allow. Identified for third and fourth order watersheds that are currently below the minimum snag density guideline, or are adjacent to extensive past harvest (Concern Level 3).	5
W4	Restrict the timing of helicopter logging and/or helicopter flight paths and road construction blasting near bald eagle nest sites when occupied. During final layout identify those eagle nests that are in close proximity to harvest units and ensure maintenance of buffer zones.	4
W5	Harvest units that are within high probability goshawk habitat or where past sightings have occurred. In 1995, goshawk surveys were conducted for 48 units, including high probability and past sighting units. Implement Region 10 management guidelines per 1996 TLMP Deaft Revision, as appropriate, if nesting is identified.	16
W6	Implement road closures immediately after harvest to minimize human disturbance to wildlife and road access by hunters in specific areas.	41
W7	Evaluate potential for disturbance and restrict harvest and road construction activities in areas and during time periods when Vancouver Canada Goose nesting or trumpeter swan wintering may be disturbed.	7
W8	Consult with District Wildlife Biologist regarding timing of harvest and road construction.	1
W9	Restrict Forest Service-authorized boat traffic and aircraft flights in the vicinity of the Steller sea lion haulout at Kasaan Point on Grindall Island.	*
W10	Restrict Forest Service-authorized boat traffic and aircraft flights in the known vicinity of humpback whales and properly dispose of cables from inactive LTF sites.	*
<b>Visual Resources</b>		
V1	Modify boundary of harvest unit to meet proposed VQO's.	1
V2	Conduct partial cutting of unit to minimize visual contrast with adjacent areas.	4
V3	Leave behind all nonmerchantable trees after clearcutting to minimize visual contrast with adjacent areas.	1
V4	Conduct partial cutting along harvest unit and setting boundaries to reduce visual contrast with adjacent areas.	3
V5	Manage views by maintaining islands or strips of trees to visually screen harvest units from saltwater or roadside where appropriate.	2
<b>Cultural Resources</b>		
C1	Provide for mitigation of indirect effects to cultural resource sites near proposed harvest units and roads.	1

Source: Project Planning Record

\* Applies to project level implementation



## Monitoring and Enforcement

A monitoring program is the process by which the Forest Service can evaluate whether or not the resource management actions of the Final EIS have been implemented as specified, whether or not the measures identified for mitigating the environmental effects were effective, and whether the resource management objectives have been met. Three types of monitoring are recognized. The first type, implementation monitoring, is routinely conducted at the project level and covers all project activities. Implementation monitoring is guided by the Harvest Unit Design Cards, Integrated Silvicultural Prescriptions, and Road Cards for each proposed activity. The second and third types of monitoring, effectiveness and validation monitoring, are conducted at the Forest-wide level. Effectiveness and validation monitoring are guided by the Ketchikan Area Monitoring Strategy. A more detailed discussion of monitoring is provided in Chapter 2 of the Final EIS.

Project-specific effectiveness and validation monitoring recommendations for the Lab Bay Project are described in Chapter 2 of the Final EIS. For each monitoring item, an objective, desired result, method of measurement, threshold, and corrective action are identified, along with the staff responsible for conducting the monitoring. Project-specific monitoring identified for the Port Protection and Whales Resort Watersheds (Units 527-206, 527-226, and 538-210) and for Port Protection Wind Patterns (Units 527-227, 527-228, and 527-229) will not be implemented, as these units are not included in the Selected Alternative.

Monitoring activities may reveal results that deviate from planned effects, in which case corrective actions are prescribed (40 CFR 1505.2(c)).

The Ketchikan Area Forest Supervisor is responsible for ensuring that project implementation, mitigation, monitoring, and enforcement are accomplished as specified.

## Findings Required By Law

### National Forest Management Act

The National Forest Management Act (NFMA) requires specific determinations in this Record of Decision including consistency with existing Forest Plans and Regional Guides.

### Tongass Land Management Plan and Alaska Regional Guide

This decision is consistent with the Alaska Regional Guide (USDA Forest Service 1983) and the Tongass Land Management Plan of 1979 (as amended). I have reviewed the management direction, standards and guidelines, and the schedule of activities for the VCU's included in the Selected Alternative, and find the Selected Alternative to be consistent with these elements. The areas of undisturbed old-growth wildlife habitat maintained in this alternative exceed the standards for retention established in the TLMP.

Although not required, the activities authorized in this decision are consistent to the extent practicable with the proposed standards and guidelines and management prescriptions of the TLMP Draft Revision (1991a). The proposed activities are consistent with the proposed standards and guidelines and management prescriptions of the 1996 Draft Revision to the extent that the 1996 Draft Revision is based on Alternative P of the 1991 Draft Revision.

### Clearcutting as the Optimal Method of Harvesting

The Alaska Regional Guide established silvicultural and management standards for the western hemlock-Sitka spruce forest type (Alaska Regional Guide, page 3-18). Even-aged management will be used where the management objective is to maintain fast growing, mistletoe-free stands of mixed forest. Uneven-aged management practices are appropriate only on those sites where significant windthrow is not anticipated and the management goal does not include high timber yields of mixed species. Clearcutting of the proposed harvest units will meet the objective of maintaining fast-growing, mistletoe-free stands of mixed species and is the optimum method of harvesting, considering the following factors referenced in the Alaska Regional Guide:

1. The thin bark and shallow roots of hemlock and spruce make them particularly susceptible to logging injury, which leads to decay. Losses from decay fungi are high, especially in the old-growth forests of Alaska. Conversion from old to young growth by clearcutting has the greatest potential for reducing decay.
2. Hemlock dwarf mistletoe (*Arcanthobium tsugense*), a common disease of western hemlock, can best be controlled by clearcutting. Elimination of residual overstory trees infected with dwarf mistletoe prevents infestation of western hemlock in the new stand.
3. Exposure to the sun raises soil temperature, which speeds decomposition, thereby improving the productivity of most sites.
4. Clearcutting favors regeneration of Sitka spruce by destroying advance hemlock regeneration and by creating more favorable conditions for post-logging reproduction of spruce.
5. Risk of blowdown in residual stands is eliminated. The chance of blowdown along cutting boundaries is increased but can be reduced through proper design of cutting units.
6. Natural seed fall is generally adequate for regeneration and most young stands are dense.
7. Logging costs are lower than with other systems.

### Created Openings Over 100 Acres in Size

There are no units proposed in the Selected Alternative in which created openings exceed 100 acres in size.

## Tongass Timber Reform Act

Harvest units were designed and will be located to maintain a minimum 100-foot buffer zone for all Class I streams and Class II streams which flow directly into Class I streams as required in Section 103(a) of TTRA. As discussed in the Mitigation section of Chapter 2 of the Final EIS, the actual widths of these buffer strips will often be greater than the 100-foot minimum. The design and implementation direction for the Selected Alternative incorporates BMP's for protection of all stream classes.

In accordance with Section 301(c)(1) of TTRA, which modified the KPC contract, the Lab Bay Project timber sale planning, management requirements, and environmental analysis procedures are consistent with procedures for independent National Forest timber sales.

Analysis of the proportion of Volume Classes 6 and 7 planned for harvest was performed as required in Section 301(c)(2) of TTRA. The proportionality analysis was conducted following the procedures outlined in the Forest Service Timber Sale Preparation Handbook, Supplement 2409.18-93-3, on Management Areas K01, K02, and K03. Upon completion of harvest, each Management Area will be within the allowable 0.50 percent tolerance level allowed in the Forest Handbook. The proportion of high volume, as measured by Volume Class 6 and 7, will be improved for each Management Area within the Lab Bay Project compared to existing conditions. Refer to the Silviculture, Timber and Vegetation Resources section of Chapter 3 of the Final EIS for a complete description of the proportionality analysis.

## Endangered Species Act

I have determined that this action will not have any adverse impacts on any threatened or endangered species. Actions authorized in the Selected Alternative are not anticipated to have a direct, indirect, or cumulative effect on any threatened, endangered or sensitive species in the Lab Bay Project Area. A complete Biological Assessment/Biological Evaluation is included in Appendix N of the Final EIS.

## Bald Eagle Protection Act

Management activities within 330 feet of an eagle nest site are restricted by a Interagency Agreement between the Forest Service and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to facilitate compliance with the Bald Eagle Protection Act. The Selected Alternative does not include any timber harvest or road construction within 330 feet of any bald eagle nest sites.



## Clean Water Act

The design of harvest units and roads for the Selected Alternative was guided by standards, guidelines, and direction contained in the TLMP (1979, as amended), the TLMP Draft Revision (1991a), the Alaska Regional Guide, and applicable Forest Service Manuals and Handbooks. The Harvest Unit Design Cards and Road Design Cards contain specific details on methods prescribed to prevent or reduce nonpoint sediment sources. Site-specific application and monitoring of approved BMP's is expected to comply with State Water Quality Standards Regulations. The harvest and road building operators will be responsible for compliance, including obtaining any variance required by the State, and will be monitored for compliance by the Forest Service. The Forest Service expects the Lab Bay Project Area activities will fully qualify for any variance required by the State, according to the criteria in 18 AAC 70.015.

## National Historic Preservation Act

Cultural resource surveys have been conducted in the Project Area. The State Historical Preservation Officer has been consulted, and the provisions of 36 CFR part 800 are being complied with. Forest Service timber sale contracts contain enforceable measures for protecting any undiscovered cultural resource that might be encountered during sale operations. No ground disturbing activities associated with this action will occur before a cultural resource clearance for that specific area has been given. I have determined, consistent with the Chief's direction on cultural resources, that there will be no significant effects on cultural resources.

## ANILCA Section 810

### Subsistence Evaluation and Findings

A subsistence evaluation was conducted for the five alternatives presented in the Draft EIS in accordance with ANILCA Section 810. Open houses followed by ANILCA Section 810 hearings were held in Port Protection/Point Baker, Whale Pass, Klawock, Craig, Coffman Cove, and Wrangell. The results from the subsistence hearings were incorporated into the development of Alternative 6 of the Final EIS and the Selected Alternative.

The evaluation of comments from the public, subsistence hearing testimony, and additional analysis indicates that a significant possibility of a significant restriction of subsistence uses for black bear and otter is present under the existing condition and all alternatives. These effects are primarily due to existing conditions (lack of habitat), and for bear a localized increase in non-subsistence hunting effort. Since these effects are not the result of the proposed actions, the alternatives considered do not differ significantly in this regard.

There is also a significant possibility of a significant restriction of overall subsistence use of deer in the Project Area in the future. These effects are due primarily to cumulative effects and a projected increase in the consumptive demand for deer.

Based on testimony from the subsistence hearings and the analysis conducted in the Final EIS, it is apparent that all of the action alternatives, as well as the No Action alternative, involve some potential to directly restrict subsistence uses for specific communities. Alternatives do not differ significantly in regard to potential effects on otter. Alternatives differ in regard to potential effects on black bear primarily to the extent that they differ in length of new road construction. The Calder Tie Road could have an especially significant impact. While all alternatives potentially affect the subsistence use of deer by the communities of Coffman Cove, Craig, Klawock, Wrangell, Point Baker, Port Protection, and Whale Pass, the effects of the Selected Alternative are significantly less than for any of the other action alternatives (essentially equal to Alternative 6). There is no alternative that would contribute to KPC Contract timber volume requirements and TLMP direction and at the same time avoid a significant possibility of a subsistence restriction on one or more communities. The Selected Alternative has the least potential effects of the action alternatives considered. Therefore, based on the analysis of the information presented in the Final EIS, it is my determination that these actions are necessary, and consistent with sound management of public lands.

The entire Tongass National Forest is used for subsistence purposes by one or more rural communities (TRUCS). The areas of most subsistence use are those adjacent to existing road systems, beaches, and in close proximity to communities. Within the Project Area, the communities



of Coffman Cove, Craig, Klawock, Wrangell, Point Baker, Port Protection, and Whale Pass are potentially affected. The last three are most at risk due to their patterns of land use — their main use areas are less extensive than those of other communities and their modes of access limit their ability to successfully use alternative areas. Much effort has been taken to construct the Selected Alternative to protect the areas with the highest value for subsistence, especially for these three communities. Specifically, the area north of the 20 Road between Red Bay and Protection Head, and areas near Red Bay and California Bay have been deferred from harvest under the Selected Alternative. Timber will be harvested on Thorne Island under an uneven-aged management plan for protection of subsistence (and other) resources. Impacts on subsistence have been minimized through the development and modification of the individual harvest units and road corridors, and ultimately the alternatives considered. Mitigation measures applicable to all resources, including subsistence, are described in this ROD. It is my determination that reasonable measures to minimize impacts on subsistence have been adopted to the maximum extent practicable while still fulfilling the purpose and need for this project.

The Selected Alternative reflects special efforts by the Forest Service to minimize the effects on subsistence resources used by those rural communities that would be most likely to receive the highest priority for game in the event of an ANILCA Section 804 "Tier II" restriction.

It is not possible to lessen harvest in one area and concentrate it in another without changing the impact on one or more rural communities' important subsistence use areas. In addition, harvestable populations of game species could not be maintained in a natural distribution across the Forest if harvest were concentrated in specific areas. A well-distributed population of species is also required by Forest Service regulations implementing the National Forest Management Act. Therefore, I conclude that the acres scheduled for harvest in the Selected Alternative meet sound multiple-use management of public lands and involve the minimum amount of public land used for subsistence. Furthermore, the Selected Alternative responds to specific resource concerns reflected in the public issues associated with this EIS.

## Executive Orders

### Executive Order 11988

Executive Order 11988 directs Federal agencies to take action to avoid, to the extent possible, the long and short-term adverse impacts associated with the occupancy and modification of floodplains. The numerous streams in the Lab Bay Project Area makes it impossible to avoid all floodplains during timber harvest and road construction. The Selected Alternative proposes to harvest 11.1 acres of timber and build 0.1 miles of road within mapped floodplains. The design of the proposed developments and the application of Best Management Practices will combine to minimize adverse impacts on floodplains.

### Executive Order 11990

Executive Order 11990 requires Federal agencies to avoid, to the extent possible, the long and short-term adverse impacts associated with the destruction or modification of wetlands. Ongoing silvicultural activities are exempt from the Section 404 permit process. Lands within Land Use Designations III and IV are under Forest Service management for commercial timber harvest. Ongoing timber harvest activities include harvesting, stand improvements, and construction and maintenance of facilities necessary to support the silvicultural activities. Supporting facilities include roads, lands, and quarries or borrow sites.

The Selected Alternative avoids most identified wetlands; however, many small wetlands or muskegs occur as inclusions within forested areas. These areas may be altered by timber harvest or road construction. Techniques and practices required by the Forest Service serve to maintain the wetland attributes including values and functions. It is estimated there will be only minimal loss of wetlands with any of the alternatives. Soil moisture regimes and vegetation on some wetlands may be altered in some cases; however, these altered acres would still be classified as wetlands and function as wetlands in the ecosystem.

### Executive Order 12898

Executive Order 12898 directs federal agencies to identify and address the issue of environmental justice, i.e., adverse human health and environmental effects of agency programs that disproportionately impact minority and low income populations. The Executive Order specifically directs agencies to consider patterns of subsistence hunting and fishing when an agency action may affect fish or wildlife. The issue of environmental justice has been addressed through the Lab Bay NEPA analysis by identifying minority or poor communities that may be affected by the proposed action; by ensuring that scoping and public involvement activities reach those communities; by evaluating the effects of the proposed action on such communities; and by documenting the analysis. Detailed discussion of potential project effects on communities and subsistence is presented in the Subsistence Resource Report (Project Planning Record).

### Executive Order 12962

Executive Order 12962 directs Federal agencies, to the extent permitted by law and where practicable, to improve the quantity, function, sustainable productivity, and distribution of U.S. aquatic resources for increased recreational fishing opportunities. Federal agencies are required to evaluate the effects of Federally funded, permitted, or authorized actions on aquatic systems and recreational fisheries and document those effects relative to the purpose of the order. Planning for the Lab Bay Sale included documentation of existing recreational fisheries opportunities; protection of riparian, water quality, and fisheries habitats; and identification of fisheries enhancement opportunities. Harvest unit and road design are consistent with the proposed standards and guidelines of the Preferred Alternative of the 1996 TLMP Draft Revision.

### Coastal Zone Management Act

The Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972, while specifically excluding Federal lands from the coastal zone, requires that a Federal agency's activities be consistent with the enforceable policies of a state's coastal management program to the maximum extent practicable when that agency's activities affect the coastal zone.

The standards and guidelines for timber management activities in the Lab Bay Project Area meet or exceed those indicated in the Alaska Forest Practices Act and the Alaska Coastal Management Program.

I have determined that the proposed activities are consistent with the Alaska Coastal Management Program to the maximum extent practicable. The Alaska Office of Governmental Coordination completed a consistency review of the Selected Alternative (May 22, 1996) and concurred with this determination.

### Federal and State Permits

Federal and State permits necessary to implement the authorized activities are listed at the end of Chapter 1 of the Final EIS.

## Implementation Process

Implementation of this decision may occur no sooner than 30 days after the date of publication of the notice of decision and availability of the Final EIS in the Federal Register, or 50 days following publication of the legal notice of the decision in the Ketchikan Daily News, published in Ketchikan, Alaska, whichever is later.

This project will be implemented in accordance with Forest Service Manual and Handbook direction for Timber Sale Project Implementation in FSM 2431.3 and FSH 2409.24. This direction provides a bridge between project planning and implementation and will ensure execution of the actions, environmental standards, and mitigation measures approved by this decision, and compliance with TTRA and other laws.

Implementation of all activities authorized by this Record of Decision will be monitored to ensure that they are carried out as planned and described in the Final EIS and ROD and Unit Design and Road Cards unless modified consistent with direction in the Forest Service Manual.



The Lab Bay Unit Design Cards and Road Design Cards (Planning Record) are an integral part of this decision because they document the specific resource concerns, management objectives, and mitigation measures to govern the layout of the harvest units and construction of roads. These cards will be used during the implementation process to assure that all aspects of the project are implemented within applicable standards and guidelines and that resource impacts will not be greater than those described in the the Final EIS. All Unit and Road Cards have been field-verified; however, minor changes in location are likely during final layout. Similar cards will be used to document any changes to the planned layout, as the actual layout and harvest of the units occurs with project implementation. The implementation record for this project will display each harvest unit, transportation facility, and other project components as actually implemented; any proposed changes to the design, location, standards and guidelines, or other mitigation measures for the project; and the decisions on the proposed changes.

## Procedure for Change During Implementation

Proposed changes to the authorized project actions will be subject to the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the National Forest Management Act of 1976 (NFMA), Section 810 of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA), the Tongass Timber Reform Act (TTRA), the Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA), and other laws concerning such changes.

In determining whether and what kind of further NEPA action is required, the Forest Supervisor will consider the criteria for whether to supplement an existing Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in 40 CFR 1502.9(c) and FSH 1909.15, sec. 18, and in particular, whether the proposed change is a substantial change to the intent of the Selected Alternative as planned and already approved, and whether the change is relevant to environmental concerns. Connected or interrelated proposed changes regarding particular areas or specific activities will be considered together in making this determination. The cumulative impacts of these changes will also be considered.

The intent of field verification was to confirm inventory data and to determine the feasibility and general design and location of a unit or road, not to locate the final boundaries or road locations. Minor changes are expected during implementation to better meet on-site resource management and protection objectives. Harvest unit prescriptions may be modified if site conditions dictate and if other resource objectives can be met. Minor adjustments to unit boundaries are also likely during final layout for the purpose of improving logging system efficiency. This will usually entail adjusting the boundary to coincide with logical logging setting boundaries. Many of these minor changes will not present sufficient potential impacts to require any specific documentation or action to comply with applicable laws. Some minor changes may still require appropriate analysis and documentation to comply with FSH 1909.15, sec. 18.



## Right To Appeal

This decision is subject to administrative appeal. Organizations or members of the general public may appeal this decision according to Title 36 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 215. The appeal must be filed within 45 days of the date that legal notification of this decision is published in the Ketchikan Daily News, the official newspaper of record. The Notice of Appeal must be filed with:

Phil Janik, Regional Forester  
U.S.D.A. Forest Service  
P.O. Box 21628  
Juneau, AK. 99802-1628

It is the responsibility of those who appeal a decision to provide the Regional Forester sufficient written evidence and rationale to show why the decision by the Forest Supervisor should be changed or reversed. The written notice of appeal must:

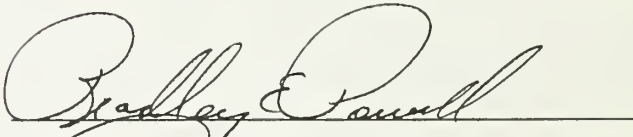
1. State that the document is a Notice of Appeal filed pursuant to 36 CFR part 215;
2. List the name, address, and, if possible, a telephone number of appellant;
3. Identify the decision document by title and subject, date of the decision, and name and title of the Responsible Official;
4. Identify the specific change(s) in the decision that the appellant seeks or portion of the decision to which the appellant objects;
5. State how the Responsible Official's decision fails to consider comments previously provided, either before or during the comment period specified in 36 CFR 215.6 and, if applicable, how the appellant believes the decision violates law, regulation, or policy.

The first timber offering is planned to be made available as part of the current timber supply in 1997.

## Contact Person

For additional information concerning the specific activities authorized with this decision, contact the Ketchikan Area Planning Staff Officer.

David Arrasmith  
Planning Staff Officer  
Ketchikan Area, Tongass National Forest  
Federal Building  
Ketchikan, AK. 99901  
(907) 225-3101

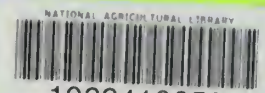
  
BRADLEY E. POWELL  
Forest Supervisor, Ketchikan Area  
Tongass National Forest

10/18/96  
Date

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